

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The specification has been revised to conform it to the preferred format for U.S. patent applications, and a Substitute Specification and Comparison Copy are submitted herewith.

Claims 1, 2, 4-16, 20 and 21 are pending in this application. All pending claims except claim 20 have been amended, claims 3 and 17-19 have been canceled, and claim 21 is new.

Applicants note with appreciation the indicated allowability of claims 3, 6, 8-10 and 12-14.

The claims were amended to delete the reference numerals therein.

Independent claim 1 has been amended by combining it with allowable claim 3 and intervening claim 2. Claim 1 is therefore in condition for allowance.

New independent claim 21 is a combination of original claims 1 and 3. Claim 21 differs from claim 1 only in that it omits intervening claim 2, which is included in amended claim 1. Since claim 3 is directed to allowable subject matter, and intervening claim 2 is not necessary to practice the claimed invention or to patentably distinguish it over the prior art, claim 21 is also in condition for allowance.


Dependent claims 4-16 and 20 are directed to independently patentable subject matter, as has been recognized by the allowance of claims 6, 8-10 and 12-14. These claims are further allowable because they depend from allowable parent claim 1.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and a formal notification to that effect at an early date is requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at (415) 273-4730 (direct dial).

Respectfully submitted,


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